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DURHAM, N.H. - In May 2000, when the Undergraduate Research Conference began at the University of New Hampshire, 159 students from 29 majors participated. This year's conference, April 17 - 25, 2009, boasts some 850-plus students representing more than 73 majors. Faculty who mentor undergraduates who present at the URC have increased from a first-year total of 83 to more than 230.

URC at UNH is one of the largest and most diverse undergraduate research conferences in the country. The span of this year's research runs from such topics as "What is Mitochondrial Disease?" to "The Origins and Modern Implications of Etiquette" to "Microalgae Growth and Biodiesel Production."

Since the first conference of student researchers, the number of events has gone from nine to 23. An Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Symposium has been added as has the Naked Arts-Creativity Exposed, a component that gives student artists working in visual and performing arts disciplines the chance to describe the creative aspects of their process.

"The reason URC can be so successful is because of all the great research being done on campus," says URC planning committee chairman Cameron Wake. "The quality of work the undergraduate students do and present is amazing. URC has become a university-wide celebration of academic success."

In 2008, UNH's Whittemore School of Business and Economics had so many students presenting their research (more than 100) that the school will have its own daylong symposium within the URC 2009.

UNH Manchester has also joined the conference, increasing participation from one event to four in 2009. And a keynote speaker has been added.

The 2009 Parents Association Undergraduate Research Symposium, where several hundred students present poster and oral presentations, features the most diverse range of presentations - from international affairs to nursing to sociology to kinesiology and many others.

"We struggled to find just the right title for fine and performing arts segment of the URC. We wanted to give these emerging artists the opportunity to reveal to an audience what lay underneath their art when you striped away the refined finish of the completed work. 'Naked Arts' seemed to say it all," says faculty mentor David Kaye, associate professor of theater and dance.

Faculty mentoring allows students to develop one-on-one relationships with a professor. Surveys of students who have participated in URC repeatedly mention faculty support as the most memorable part of their experience. To view the URC calendar of events go to <http://www.unh.edu/urc/events-descriptions.html>.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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